

Forty Years On.

by Tabatha Stirling

When we fell in love it was fight in the night and bloody noses for breakfast. The taste of sin was on everybody's lips and a harvest of souls by the Bible Belt made smug contributions to rural hospitals.

I may have mowed your lawn in the sweet-sweat lines of the Mississippi but in New York I might have been a lawyer. Could have fandangled some of the greybacks on Wall Street. Taken them for ride colder than the Hudson on an icicle day in February.

I may have chopped your kindling in the warm, honeyed shadow of the acacia tree but in Connecticut, I could have been a poet. Salted words, cursing and spitting, through the hipster joints and green leaf cafés. Guilted blondes sweeping my eye line with their fine hair and freckles.

I may have been caught kissing you in the dusk of the day, with the static currents of 'god's anointed' pounding in our ears. As children, wide eyed with tiny glimmers of thrill, meandered through our fate in boats of willow.

We may have fled, battered and you, bleeding a ripe, white-red from between your legs and your hair shorn, defiant and too beautiful to mention. Those shrouds of hate too liquored up to pursue a coon and his whore much past the state line.

We never forgot, did we, baby. Those long, faulty evenings when your vision blurred and you bit your lip until it burst like cherry-coke on a marble floor.

And we clung and sung and watched others hand in hand and celebrated an acceptance. A fist of triumph blazing black and everything.

